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IV.—*The Jamaica Maroons—How they came to Nova Scotia—How they left it.*

By D. BRYMNER, LL.D., Dominion Archivist.

(Read May. 23, 1894.)

The echoes of the terror caused by the Maroons in Jamaica still lingered when I was a boy, but they must long since have died away, as it is nearly a century since these negroes were removed to Nova Scotia and thence transferred to Sierra Leone.

For the early history of the Maroons I have relied chiefly on the account by Bryan Edwards and on that by Dallas. The one was published in 1796, in one volume, and is, in reality, an official answer by the legislature of Jamaica to charges made against the authorities in the island; the other, largely, if not wholly, a compilation from statements made to Dallas by Mr. Quarrell, the commissioner sent, during the final outbreak, to Cuba for dogs and slave-hunters, and subsequently in charge of the Maroons on their removal to Nova Scotia. It was published in 1803, in two volumes, much of it consisting of an eulogium of Mr. Quarrell, to whom is ascribed the chief honour of restoring peace to the island, but his statements on that and other subjects are not to be relied on entirely. For the history from 1796, I have consulted the original correspondence contained in the Public Record Office, London.

The origin of the name "Maroon" has been the subject of much controversy. Long, in 1774, calls them "hog hunters," from *Marano*, a young pig. The *Encyclopedie*, quoted by Edwards, derives it from *simaran*, an ape, from their hiding in the woods. Lucas, in his recent work, "A Historical Geography of the British Colonies," says it is an abbreviation of *cimaron*, derived from the Spanish or Portuguese *cima*, "a mountain top," and refers to the "Encyclopedia Britannica" for further information, but that work throws little light on the subject. These various derivations depend almost entirely on the statements of early adventurers, who are not greatly to be trusted in matters of philology. I am inclined to think, but I give the suggestion with reserve, that the name is a direct application of the word *marron*, "a wild or stray dog." Littré, in his great French dictionary, gives the name as *nègre marron*, "a fugitive slave who betakes himself to the woods," an explanation which might suit any of the derivations. The question is one of no great importance, but it may be noticed that the Malagasie slaves in Mauritius, imported by the Dutch, were known, when they fled to the woods, by the same name as those in Jamaica.

The island of Jamaica was taken possession of by Columbus for Spain in 1494, and was subsequently granted to his family, the vicissitudes of whose fortunes it would be out of place to deal with here. It was twice taken before its final capture during Cromwell's time; once by Shirley, in 1596, according to Dallas, or 1597, according to Lucas, whose accuracy I am more inclined to trust, for I did not think it necessary to search for the official authority; it was again taken by Jackson in 1635. These were, properly speaking buccaneering expeditions for the sake of plunder, at least they ended, if they did not begin, with that object in view; for they were certainly not regularly organized attacks for the acquisition of territory to form part of the national domain.

When the Spaniards took possession of the island, the native population is represented to have numbered about two millions, described as mild and inoffensive, possessed of many of the arts of civilized life and proficient in agriculture. After the death of the first governor, whose rule was mild and gentle, his successors, it is asserted and preserved in history, determined to clear the land of the ancient inhabitants, and apparently effected their object, as, according to Dallas, not a solitary individual of that race could be found when the island was taken possession of by Venables and Penn in 1655. At that date there were about 1,500 negro slaves in possession of the Spaniards, the great bulk of whom, with many of the dispossessed Spaniards, their former masters, took to the woods and mountain fastnesses, and thence carried on an irregular warfare, no country in the world giving greater facilities for attacks of this nature, being mountainous, wooded, and full of almost inaccessible retreats, with narrow, tortuous and rugged approaches, overlooked by steep wooded banks, from the shelter of which a few determined men could exterminate a well-appointed army without loss to themselves.

A question arises as to the positive truth of the charges against the Spaniards of their ruthless and blood-thirsty slaughter of the natives, when it is compared with the attachment shown by the slaves for their Spanish masters. It is well-known that native races, of hardier frames than those who inhabited Jamaica, have dwindled and become extinct in the face of civilization, even when no ill-treatment could be alleged against their conquerors. From causes of this nature, therefore, the race may have died out without any blood-thirsty or predetermined design on the part of the Spaniards. It is probably impossible now to solve this question. The real cause of the inveterate hostility of the Maroons to the new owners of the island has not been so much as touched on. Some explanation of it may be found in the temper and disposition of the soldiery, who, from the first, were insubordinate and mutinous; not only disobeying their officers, but wantonly destroying the cattle, grain and property of the unfortunate inhabitants who had remained on their lands when the others fled to the woods, raising in them a spirit of hatred, and

driving them to join in the mountains those who had already taken shelter there. In the hands and under the control of a strong man like Cromwell, the troops employed in the reduction of Jamaica might have been kept in order, but a body of men strongly embued with levelling principles and impatient of the slightest control, especially refusing obedience to the royalist d'Oyley, could only have been kept in military subjection by the determined power of the leader of the Ironsides whom he disciplined into a trustworthy force. Hence the violence and scenes of disorder in the island, and hence, there seems little doubt, the bloody reprisals made by the fugitive Spaniards and negroes, who burned and destroyed animate and inanimate alike, whenever they had or could make opportunity, slaughtering without mercy every man, woman and child of their hated conquerors, giving no quarter to any one, no matter of what age or sex.

A few trifling advantages over the Maroons were counterbalanced by the slaughter of soldiers and others caught straying out of bounds. Want of provisions and ammunition secured, in 1664, the surrender of part of the fugitives, but a large body held out and kept the interior of the country in such a state of alarm that few ventured far from the coast; the whites who attempted to form settlements inland being ruthlessly slaughtered.

A proclamation offering a free pardon, 20 acres of land, and freedom from slavery, had little, if any, effect, and Juan de Bolas, the head man of the party which surrendered, was killed when in command of an expedition for the reduction of those who held out. Under pretense of negotiating for peace, the hostile blacks obtained breathing time, and having lulled the white inhabitants into security, the slaughter began with greater intensity and the island was under a reign of terror for upwards of forty years, according to Edwards. Even counting from the renewal of the outbreak after 1664, this state of affairs lasted till 1738, a period of 74 years. In reality, the duration of the Maroon war, without cessation, was 82 years, for the peace of 1664 was only partial, and, so far as the part which held out was concerned, was only a truce, during which preparations were made for fresh hostilities.

Cudjoe, the leader with whom peace was made in 1738, was a man who from his physical and mental qualifications obtained the chief command over the different groups of Maroons. For years he had, by the skilful disposition of his forces, defied every attack, taking advantage of the peculiar formation of the mountain recesses and the difficult approaches. But experience taught the white commanders how best to meet the tactics of the Maroons by means suited to the contest with an enemy who could fight and disappear with little loss, after causing great injury to the invading force. In 1730, two regiments of regulars were sent to the island as a reinforcement, corps of rangers, light auxiliary

troops were employed, and the whole of the militia called out, so serious had become the danger to the island from this guerilla warfare. The Maroons, active, hardy and brave, and knowing every pass and the most suitable places for lying in wait, made the task of reducing them one of great difficulty and danger. To the white forces were added loyal negroes, known as "black shot," mulattoes and Indians, the latter brought from the Mosquito shore. Attacks were made constantly on the provision grounds of the Maroons, and a harassing war was carried on against them, but at great loss of life to the attacking parties. To avoid long marches and facilitate the attacks, posts were established in situations as near as possible to the Maroon settlements, and, when possible, in such positions as to prevent them from obtaining access to their provision grounds. These posts were garrisoned by white and black troops and baggage negroes. Their duty was to make excursions, scour the woods and mountains, and destroy the provision grounds and haunts of the Maroons. To assist in these duties, every barrack was furnished with a pack of dogs to track the enemy and prevent surprises at night. Both sides became tired of the conflict, and it was only a question of time which should first hold out the offer of peace to the other. The constant alarms, the hardships of military service, and the intolerable expense without any adequate results, urged the white inhabitants to secure peace on any terms. The famine to which the Maroons were exposed, hemmed in, as they were on all sides, with their provisions destroyed and access to water rendered almost impossible, drove the Maroons in the same direction, so that they were tempted to surrender unconditionally. Fortunately for them, their desperate state was not known, and the extreme step of an unconditional surrender became unnecessary by Governor Trelawney proposing overtures of peace. On the 1st of March, 1738, as the result of negotiations, a treaty of peace was concluded between the Governor and Cudjoe, acting for the Maroons, by which it was stipulated that to one body of them should be assigned in perpetuity 1,500 and to another 1,000 acres. The second clause of the treaty provided for their perpetual freedom; the sixth that Cudjoe, his adherents and successors were to assist in hunting down all rebels on the island; the seventh that they were to assist in repelling invasion. Other clauses provided for the redress of grievances and injuries committed on or by Maroons; they were to apprehend fugitive slaves, for whom a reward of thirty shillings each was to be paid, afterwards increased to three pounds. Laws and regulations were from time to time passed for the government of the Maroons. As the ostensible cause of the last conflict that preceded their deportation to Nova Scotia was the violation of the treaty by the flogging of two of the Maroons, it may be as well to examine its terms. By the eighth clause it was agreed that in the event of injury being done to any of the Maroons, application should be made to the commanding

officer or a magistrate in the neighbourhood; should the injury be committed by a Maroon on a white person, he was to be given up to justice. No mention is made in the treaty of the penalty, which it is plain from all the circumstances was to be the usual punishment for the particular offence, whether that had been committed by a Maroon or by a white. For crimes committed among themselves the punishment, short of death, was to be decided by the captains. So extreme an offence as subjected the criminal to such an expiation was to be in the same manner as was done in similar cases among other free negroes.

Cudjoe's treaty did not, however, restore peace at once. A party under Quaco, known as the Windward body, still held out, and inflicted a signal defeat on the troops sent after them, so complete, indeed, that the troops were glad to escape, leaving the dead and wounded on the field. It was more than a year before a complete pacification was effected, the treaty with Quaco being signed in the summer of 1739.

Peace once established, the regulations so solemnly passed by the Legislature of Jamaica appear to have become a dead letter. The character and habits of the Maroons are so differently described by the two authors, Edwards and Dallas, as to be altogether irreconcilable. The descriptions by Edwards appear, on the whole, to be nearest the truth; Dallas, whilst attempting to explain them away, unconsciously admitting their correctness. The accounts of the occurrences in the slave revolt of 1760, furnish a good example of this diversity of opinion. In pursuance of the treaties, the Maroons were to take part in the attack on the revolted slaves. Edwards states that they set out on the expedition and returned with the ears of the rebels, whom they represented they had slain, so that they might get the stipulated reward, but that it was discovered afterwards they had simply cut the ears off corpses and had been of no service. A few nights after this occurrence, he continues, the troops were attacked by a concealed enemy and a number of the soldiers killed, but not a Maroon was to be seen, so that it was at first supposed they were the assailants, but after the fight they were found lying down in concealment. "The picture" says Edwards, "which I have drawn of "character and manners, was delineated from the life, after long experi-"ence and observation." Dallas, on the other hand, speaking from hearsay, says they were active in the suppression of rebellion, and stood forth with determined spirit against the insurgents, and in 1760, the same year spoken of by Edwards, they lost several of their people. Their long contest, even under every advantage of concealment, proves they were not cowards; but Dallas, agreeing with Edwards, states the fact of their marital, or *quasi* marital, connection with the plantation s s, which may fully account for the inaction described by Edwards.

For some years after the treaties of 1738 and 1739, they led a wandering, idle life, any cultivation that was done on their farms being the

work of their wives, of whom each man could have as many as he chose, the number varying from two to half-a-dozen, sometimes more. The men were idle, not lazy, a distinction well brought out by Washington Irving in his "Rip Van Winkle," whom he describes as doing no useful work, but wandering for days in pursuit of game, carrying a heavy fowling-piece, a burden greater than would have been required in the discharge of his proper duties; and this was the case with the Maroons. The regulations for their control, and by which their wanderings could have been restrained within due limits, were not enforced. They kept up a constant intercourse with the plantation slaves, forming temporary marriages with them, for the marriage tie sat lightly on them, the children of these marriages becoming slaves, following the condition of the mother. Proud of their freedom, regarding the slaves as inferior, no discipline enforced, they went about at their own sweet will, an idle, vagabond community, and when an attempt was made to control them the inevitable result followed, the long indulgence had done its work and no restraint was possible. Examples of this are easily to be found in families and in communities who regard themselves as on a much higher plane of intellect and civilization than the free blacks of Jamaica.

From the signing of the last treaty more than half a century (fifty-six years) had passed without an outbreak by the Maroons. Cudjoe and his generation had passed away; another generation had followed. Of all the Maroons who were alive in 1795, when the final struggle began, it is probable that not one had done an honest day's work, labour of all kinds being left to the women. It is possible that a few may have been industrious, but it is extremely improbable. Their position was peculiar; they did nothing; they amused themselves; they strutted about, black Apollos, uncontrolled; they looked down with ineffable contempt on the negro slaves, who were compelled to work and were subject to being flogged at the caprice of a slave driver; the slaves in turn looked up to them as superior beings. Under these circumstances it needed but a slight cause to bring about a fresh conflict between them and the power which had abnegated its functions and let authority slip out of its grasp. The pretext was found in the case of two worthless vagabonds, despised by the Maroons themselves, who, charged with felony, were tried, found guilty and flogged, as a white man would have been under similar circumstances. The punishment was not in itself objected to, but the executioner of it was, a recaptured negro slave kept in prison to flog the slaves brought there for punishment. Maddened by resentment at what they considered an insult, and still further incensed by the jeers of the slaves, who taunted them with having been subjected to the same treatment as themselves, the younger men, contrary to the advice of their seniors, sent a defiance to government and prepared for a struggle. Probably, however, owing to the counsels of the more cool-headed among

them, they proposed a conference, alleging that they were desirous of coming to terms. The object was, there can be no doubt, to gain time until the troops had left the island, orders having been given to that effect. The Governor, deceived by their assurances, allowed the troops to embark and sail, but on receiving authentic intelligence that the Maroons were determined to rise, he was fortunately enabled to recall at least a portion of the troops before hostilities began. The first defiance was given early in July, 1795, the first actual outbreak nearly a month later, when the Maroons burned their own town, attacked the outposts and took to the mountains. Before the end of January, 1796, the war was practically over, the great body of the Maroons had signified their desire to surrender on conditions, one of these being that if they fulfilled the agreement to come in at once and lay down their arms, they should not be removed from the island; the third that they were to send back all fugitive slaves who had taken refuge among them. The non-fulfilment of this latter also left the determination of their destination an open question. Neither of these conditions was complied with and the Governor and Legislature determined to send them off. The agreement not to send them away was accepted by General Walpole on his word of honour, and when the resolution was taken to expel the Maroons from Jamaica, he felt keenly what he considered to be a breach of his agreement and refused to accept the sword of honour voted for him by the Assembly. This feeling was, no doubt, highly creditable to General Walpole's high sense of honour, but the circumstances appear to indicate that it was due to an over-strained estimate of the obligation he had incurred towards the Maroons. That they did not come in and lay down their arms is undoubted, and that a second expedition to force them to come in is fully proved. That the other condition was also violated, by the non-delivery of the fugitive slaves, is not open to doubt. Add to this the necessity of getting rid once for all of a most dangerous element to the community and the removal was not only justifiable but necessary. Not on the latter ground had that stood by itself, and that the terms of the treaty had been carried out, for in that case the agreement, however imprudent, could not have been disregarded, except at the cost of public dishonour.

The final surrender was accomplished by means of the second expedition, and the part played by the Cuban bloodhounds in securing this result has been made the most of. According to the account of General Walpole, the highest evidence on the subject, the dogs had nothing to do with the surrender, which he attributed entirely to his method of dealing with the Maroons by gentle means. Speaking of his success in bringing about a surrender, General Walpole, writing on 23rd January, 1796, says: "The dogs had certainly nothing to do with it; it was not, I apprehend, "known to the Maroons that they were with us, for the Maroons had "moved the day before we did."

The Maroons, after their complete surrender, were transferred to barracks, strongly guarded, and preparations were made for their shipment, it being the intention to settle them in Lower Canada on lands acquired for that purpose. Upper Canada had also been suggested as a suitable place, but finally the decision was arrived at that they were to be taken to Halifax, there to remain until instructions were received from the Secretary of State, and Messrs. Quarrell and Ochterlony, the commissaries who were to accompany the banished Maroons, were directed accordingly. On the 26th of June, 1796, the transports having them on board sailed from Port Royal harbour, in company with a large fleet bound for Europe under convoy, from which they parted on reaching the coast, and on the 24th July Governor Wentworth wrote to the Under Secretary of State that they had arrived at Halifax, but were not yet landed, and that he thought they would make excellent settlers. The date of arrival is not given in Governor Wentworth's letter; one of the vessels arrived on the 21st, and the rest on the 23rd of July, the passage having thus taken close upon seven weeks.

The first employment in which the Maroons were engaged after landing at Halifax was on the fortifications erected on the demand of the Duke of Kent, then general in command of the district, an attack being apprehended from the squadron under command of Admiral Richery, in prosecution of the war by revolutionary France then in progress. The Maroons were housed in temporary huts, rented houses and tents close to the place of their employment; and they worked cheerfully under the direction of the Duke, offering, indeed, to work for the King's son without pay, an offer which, of course, was not accepted. Their conduct gave general satisfaction, relieving the people of Halifax of the apprehension that had prevailed from the accounts they had received of the ferocious and bloodthirsty character of the new arrivals. The weather, too, was favourable to the diffusion of a spirit of satisfaction among the Maroons, as they arrived in the warm season, the heat of which approached, if it did not equal, that of the island which had been their home. By the end of October they were settled on the lands purchased for them, not without internal disputes, and their want of experience in defending themselves against the cold must have caused great discomfort, although the correspondence does not show this, Wentworth writing in November that they were enjoying comfort and happiness.

From the first the Governor did not place much confidence in the commissaries, but assumed the whole care and management, alleging that t commissaries were strangers to this business, and, as far as can be judged from the correspondence, there was a mutual dislike. The winter passed over quietly, but in the spring, after the experience of the cold season, a spirit of restlessness seemed to prevail among the Maroons. Whether this prompted the proposal of Ochterlony, one of the Jamaica

commissaries, or whether he first suggested the movement, is not clear, but in the month of April, 1797, Ochterlony presented to Wentworth his scheme for embodying the Maroons as a regiment, himself to be colonel, to be transferred to the Cape of Good Hope. The plan was not regarded in a favourable light by Wentworth, who represented to the Secretary of State that the regiment would be encumbered with a train of women and children double the number of the men, and to turn such a body of men loose at the Cape with arms in their hands would be dangerous to the community. The safest place for them, he maintained, was Nova Scotia, where they could do no mischief nor mix with people who could corrupt them. He charged Ochterlony with being actuated by interested motives, hoping to make a fortune as colonel. The scheme was defeated, and Ochterlony was dismissed from his office, on the charge of causing serious losses to Jamaica by his mismanagement. The Maroons were then placed in charge of Capt. Howe, under whom they are reported to have made satisfactory progress, but that they made any real progress is exceedingly doubtful, for although a favourable report is made of the children at school, the men, it is complained, would do no work, hoping to be kept in idleness, a fact not to be wondered at, considering that whilst in Jamaica they did absolutely nothing but amuse themselves.

The number who left Jamaica and landed at Halifax is nowhere clearly stated. "About" 600 are said to have been on board the transports on leaving Port Royal, but this can have been only an approximate estimate. The first enumeration reported is that made by the surgeon, Oxley, on 1st July, 1797, who gives the total as 526, increased 1st August to 532, and on 1st September to 543, both increases being due to births. But that these must have been more numerous seems evident, as one death is noted and there were probably more, so that there must have been births to counterbalance the losses by death.

Early in 1799 Wentworth complained of intrigues to foment discontent among the Maroons, who but for these would have been happy and contented, yet in the same despatch he reports that they are determined to get back to Jamaica—two statements which it is not easy to reconcile.

In 1796, before the Maroons had been sent to Nova Scotia, a correspondence had been opened by the Secretary of State with the African Company on a proposal to send them to Sierra Leone. But the experience of the company with the negroes who had fled from the United States during the war ending in 1783 and taken refuge in Nova Scotia, from which they were removed in 1792, led the directors to refuse to entertain the idea of dealing with another body of negroes whose reputation could not be held to warrant such a step. The conduct of the first body of negroes had been turbulent and mutinous, causing great anxiety and expense to the company, and not unnaturally the directors dreaded that the Maroons would make common cause with their brethren in

colour. This is not the opinion that was held at the time, as it was then supposed that the African Company had been exerting influence to secure the removal of the Maroons from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone. An examination of the correspondence shows that this belief was ill-founded. Early in 1799 the Secretary of State reopened negotiations with the African Company, which did not respond with warmth; in fact, showed a great unwillingness to undertake the charge of these people. In May Wentworth wrote that he had heard of the negotiations, but his letter of the 23rd was very cautious. On the 24th, the following day, he gave the proposal for the removal of his approval, and added, showing the changed feeling towards them after nearly three years' residence in the province, that the inhabitants had great satisfaction at their being taken away. Difficulties, however, continued to be raised by the African Company to their reception, owing to the danger apprehended from their being settled on the mainland, and the necessity of placing them on an island from which an exit would not be easy. Finally they recommended the acquisition of the island of Bulam, at a sufficient distance from Freetown, which would not only accommodate them but the Caribs—an incidental evidence of the intention to remove that body of people also from the West Indies, where they had played the same part in St. Vincent as the Maroons had done in Jamaica. Obstacles to their speedy shipment arose, too, in Nova Scotia, where transports could not be obtained, although in February, 1800, they were ready to embark at an hour's notice. When this was overcome, the agent for the African Company protested against their sailing before August, as otherwise they would arrive in the rainy season. On the 6th of August Wentworth reported that they had embarked and were ready to sail, but before leaving they made an offer to contract for the delivery of 500 slaves, presumably to be caught after their arrival at Freetown—not a good augury of their future behaviour. They arrived in Sierra Leone on the 1st of October, 1800, assisted to quell an insurrection among the negroes previously sent from Nova Scotia, three of whom were executed, several banished, and some of the ringleaders escaped among the natives. The conduct of the Maroons in Africa was on the whole satisfactory, but they still retained a longing to return to Jamaica, so that little cultivation was done nor is it likely much would have been done in any case, although they are reported to have become good mechanics and labourers. What became of them subsequently it is beyond the scope of this paper to trace.

Stockton, Calif.

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